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SUBJECT: FUSION'S GAILLARD OPTIMISTIC ABOUT PREVAL

11. (SBU) Summary: Fusion party spokesman Micha Gaillard believes that Haitian politics have entered a new era of negotiation and compromise as a direct result of President-elect Rene Preval,s conciliatory approach and endeavors to build a coalition government. Gaillard and his party are enthusiastic about Preval,s proposed 25-year governance plan and see it as a vehicle for democratic change in Haiti. A party colleague from Gonaives warned however, of potential unrest from slum areas if Preval is not able to deliver immediate improvements to his supporters. Gaillard was a leading figure in the Group of 184 (G-184) civil society movement opposing former president Aristide and was no fan of Preval during the electoral campaign. His enthusiasm for the prospects of political reconciliation are heartening and reflect the sincere efforts Preval has made to reach out across the political spectrum. End Summary.

12. (SBU) Gaillard and other Fusion leaders met with Poloff on the eve of the second round of parliamentary elections, April 20, to discuss the prospective role of Parliament under a Preval administration. Gaillard asserted that a new era in Haitian politics is developing because of Preval,s outreach to the opposition parties and that Preval has built confidence and created an atmosphere for problem solving among the parties and civil society. Asked how he viewed the prospective relationship between Preval and Parliament, Gaillard emphasized the need for a "harmonized relationship." The country was tired of political confrontation and political parties were ready to cooperate, though given Haiti's non-democratic political culture the new parliament faced challenges in maintaining respect for democratic practices.

13. (SBU) Preval has twice met with the Fusion team and has requested a third meeting. Gaillard sensed "a spirit of cooperation," in the discussions, which focused on challenges such as electricity, food security, and infrastructure. Fusion did not intend to be a "block of ice" when dealing with the Preval government, but will lobby for changes they believe are important to their constituency, and for constructive change overall.

14. (SBU) Gaillard was equally excited about Preval,s "25-year plan," an initiative Preval has launched with the stated purpose of ensuring broad long term political commitment to Haiti,s development needs. While Preval has

provided little substance on the plan thus far, Gaillard said that the idea generates enthusiasm among the opposition. Gaillard indicated that several parties, including Fusion would collaborate in formulating the plan that would integrate ideas from all sectors on the environment, education, infrastructure, and government institutions.

¶5. (SBU) Tempering Gaillard,s optimism somewhat, his colleague from Gonaives cautioned that Gonaives was quiet for now, but could be a problem for Preval if the population continued to feel ignored and neglected. Interim Prime Minister Latortue, who hails from the city, had promised a lot, but Gonaives had seen little in the way of tangible changes. The Fusion official cautioned that the Preval government could not discount the strength and potential of Gonaives, armed gangs to create disorder.

¶6. (U) The Fusion party formed in April 2005 as the result of the merger of three left-of-center parties (KONAKAM, PANPRA, and Ayiti Kapab). Party leader and presidential candidate Serge Gilles finished a distant fifth in the presidential race with 2.6 percent of the vote, but Fusion profited from a relatively strong national organization, and will likely hold 4 or 5 of the 30 senate seats. Preliminary results indicate they have won 9 of the 67 deputy races already decided, with results pending for the other 32 races.

¶7. (SBU) Comment: Gaillard is among the most prominent among the G-184 figures committed to deposing former president Aristide. He was very critical of Preval's refusal to participate in the presidential debates. That Preval has won him over) thus far, at least) is a major coup and a credit to Preval,s efforts to reach out to his opponents.

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Another encouraging surprise is the importance that Gaillard ascribes to Preval,s 25-year plan. Although the plan is short on substance at the moment, presidential commitment to a formal vehicle for political reconciliation will be the crucial factor in any reconciliation effort.
SANDERSON